

body 11 is speculative, as it is not supported nor suggested by the drawing or text; and it is undercut by the text on page 2, 3rd line of 3rd paragraph, which says "Body 11 is free to rotate on shaft 1".

Anderson at Col. 3, line 5-15 says that picker belt 26 is rotated by pulley 48 mounted on shaft 49. However, the body (bracket) 52 is pivotably mounted on shaft 49. As such the body cannot be imparted a rotary frictional force moment. Applicant believes that the force created by belt 26 which the examiner refers to in his rejection is that which is due to the interaction of the belt with the paper. It is a distinctly different force and is referred to by applicant as "still another desirable rotational moment". See the first full paragraph at Page 8. See claim 29.

The patents neither show nor suggest the invention, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Response to the 35 USC 103 rejection

The examiner rejected claim 30 based on the Habich and Anderson patents. However, claim 30 as now amended for clarity, includes a shingled stack of sheet and a functional relationship between the stack and the prompter, wherein the stack is shingled. See applicant's Fig. 3 for instance. Both the cited references show an unshingled stack; and the two reference apparatuses have no capacity to accept a shingled stack. See Fig. 1 in each reference. Thus, it cannot be obvious, nor is it suggested, to combine a prompter/picker with the shingled stack. Regardless, the claim obtains novelty from claim 26.

Claim 27 is rejected based on the combination of Habich, Anderson and O'Brien patents. However, O'Brien's bifurcated body 40 is part of a rhomboid assembly. The function of the assembly, and the function of a body within the assembly is different from the function of the bodies of the two other references or of applicant. The O'Brien apparatus is a singulator, and not a picker. The O'Brien body is not movable relative to the paper path in the way in which the bodies of Habich and Anderson are. The rhomboid assembly of which body 40 is part is attached to rear wall 41 at two points. The pivotable motion of the assembly and bodies 40 within the assembly is slight. See Fig. 5 and the others. See Col 3, lines 5-57. See Col. 6, lines 2-6.

The O'Brien belt 38 does not run endlessly around the first and second end rollers at the end of the body, consistent with applicants' claim, nor consistent with the two patent references. The O'Brien belt runs in reverse direction to the direction of the flow of sheets. Any frictional engagement of the O'Brien belt with a sheet or envelope will tend to lift the rhomboid assembly from the path. This is a motion opposite to what

applicant claims.

Thus, there are numerous differences between the configuration and functions of O'Brien apparatus and those of the two references and those of applicants. The two reference apparatuses could not accept a bifurcated body without substantial modification of their configurations, and there is no suggestion how to do that. So, it cannot be obvious how to combine the O'Brien body with the apparatuses of the two other patents; and, the matter in parent claim 26 is novel. Thus withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

As to claim 28, the same argument is submitted and will not be repeated. Applicants agree it is normal to stretch belts around rollers. What is not normal, nor suggested by the references is to stretch a belt around a first and second rollers spaced apart by a bifurcated, having a frictionally engaged first end, where the belt tension force with generates friction between the body and the shaft. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus requested. At least the claim is patentable also by virtue of its dependence from a patentable claim, 27 or 26.

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Claim 29 ought to be allowable because the body has a combination of two independently created moments, which combination is untaught or un-suggested. Further, the claim ought to be allowed at least because of the novelty it obtains by virtue of dependency from a patentable claim, i.e., claim 27 or 26.

Examiner noted a typo, namely "isstretched" in claim 28. That typo appears in the pages showing where changes were made on 15 October. Applicants submitted a clean copy of all the claims as amended on 15 October, where the typo has been corrected. If applicants are wrong and some further technical change is needed, the guidance of the examiner is solicited.

Claims 31-32 were rejected based on Habich, Anderson and Watanabe. However, applicants' claim is to ribs which are substantially deflectable. Applicants' Figs. 5A and 5B show how the ribs are substantially deflectable. Watanabe is silent on how deflectable his ribs are. However, visually, from the aspect ratio and common knowledge it would not appear they would not be substantially deflectable. Therefore, combination of the three patents does not teach the invention. (Nor does the combination of the first two patents, in the first instance, teach the invention of the parent claim, as argued above.)

Claim 32 has been made intelligible as indicated above. Claim 32 had in it garbled matter which is now presented as new claim 45, for the triangle rib belt configuration shown in Fig. 5B. Claim 45 ought to be allowable for the same reason as claim 32; and because Watanabe does not suggest triangle cross section ribs. Measuring a blow up of Watanabe's sketch (Attachment A here) as best as possible indicates an aspect ratio of around 0.8-0.9 to 1 for the rectangular cross section ribbed belt 10 and about 0.6 to 1 for the trapezoid

cross section ribbed belt 7. Thus, claims 32 and 45 ought to be allowable. There is no suggestion of a need for higher aspect ratio, and applicant has described the benefit in the self-cleaning nature of such high aspect ratio ribbed belts. See the description at page 7 bottom.

Claim 39 has been rejected based on Habich and Anderson in view of Irsik. Claim 39 has been amended so it includes adjustment screws which operate in combination with the resilient force means. Claim 39 ought to now be allowable over the combination; and at least because it is dependent from an allowable claim and obtains novelty therefrom.

Applicants repeat a request for withdrawal of rejections and allowance of all claims; and if granted, repeat a request for review and rescission of the restriction requirements for reasons previously urged.

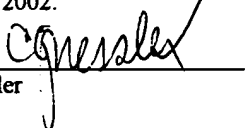
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on August 29, 2002.


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